



Imperial Court of the Qing Dynasty (QING)

Chairs:
Diane Zhang
Mindy Long

Letter from the Chairs

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Imperial Court of the Qing Dynasty, 1890-1900 - the (QING) Committee at MIT Model UN (MITMUNC) 2019! We, Mindy Long and Diane Zhang, are excited to be your chairs for this conference.

I'm Diane Zhang, a freshman at MIT intending to major in Computer Science and Molecular Biology and minor in Spanish. Although I am new to Model UN, I was involved in Model Congress throughout my last two years of high school, which was formative in my outlook on leadership, public policy, and current events. Outside of Model UN, I conduct bioinformatics research in the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard, work on a sustainability-related project for Design for America, and am a Community Service Coordinator in the American Red Cross Team and Network of MIT. I look forward to meeting all of you at the conference and hearing you develop your ideas!

My name is Mindy Long, a first-year at MIT intending to major in some combination of Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, and Mathematics. Originally from Phoenix, Arizona, I am currently learning to adapt to the New England winters. This is my first time participating in Model UN, but I was a public forum debater for two years in high school. In addition, I've played Quiz Bowl in high school and college, an activity that induces me to keep up with global affairs and that reinforces my love for history. At MIT, I'm also involved with the Society of Women Engineers and the Asian Dance Team. Feel free to ask me any questions about my experiences! I am looking forward to chairing my first Model UN committee and hearing everyone's ideas!

The topics that we plan to debate in the QING include:

I. The Fallout of the Opium Wars

II. Decline of the Qing and Reform Following the First Sino-Japanese War

This is meant to be an introduction to the topics and should not replace individual research. We hope that you take the time to research your topics and your delegation's affiliation with the given issues. In preparation for the conference, each delegate will submit a single page position paper on each topic to mitmunc-qing@mit.edu. We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Sincerely,
Mindy Long & Diane Zhang
Chairs, QING

Topic I: The Fallout of the Opium Wars

Historical Background:

In 1840, the Qing Dynasty was perched at the door to its decline, a period now known as the “Century of Humiliation”. Originally established after an ethnic group from Northern China known as the Manchus overthrew the Ming Dynasty in 1644, the Qing dynasty oversaw China’s first interactions with the West since the Ming emperors’ isolationist policies in the late 14th century. Jesuit missionaries, who first entered China in the mid-16th century, began gaining traction in the late Qing dynasty. In addition, Protestant missionaries from the United States first arrived in 1807. The growing Western religious influence in China culminated in a series of rebellions in the late 19th century including the Taiping Rebellion, led by a self-proclaimed brother of Jesus Christ, and the Boxer Uprising, a struggle prompted by anti-foreign and anti-Christian sentiment.

Coupled with China’s religious battles with the West were economic battles as well. From the 16th to the 18th century, the global economy emerged with the trade of silver. European royalty craved Chinese goods, and China in turn demanded copious amounts of silver to fund its switch from paper money to coins. With the Spanish Empire’s discovery of the New World and its silver mines in Potosí and Zacatecas, Europeans satiated China’s demand for silk, porcelain, and tea by trading American silver with China. However, this drainage of silver from European hands to the Chinese quickly resulted in a trade deficit in favor of China. In addition, as a vestige of the Ming dynasty’s isolationism, the Qing government only permitted trade with Western nations at a singular port in South China – Canton. Known as the Canton system, this policy severely restricted European efforts to balance the trade deficit since China was not interested in purchasing European goods. Frustrated by this situation, Great Britain resorted to illegally selling opium cultivated in its colonies in India to turn the tide in its economic battle with China.

In 1840, Emperor Daoguang called his court to discuss the opium situation in Canton and throughout China with his leading officials and advisors. Since 1838, British traders had sold roughly 1,400 tons of opium a year at Chinese ports. In addition, officials from every region in his empire have detailed the amount and state of opium addicts in their cities, towns, and provinces. In 1839, Emperor Daoguang ordered the government into action by appointing Lin Zexu as Special Imperial Commissioner of Canton specifically with the task of eradicating the opium trade in China. Three factors prompted this reaction:

1. **Growing opium addiction**
2. **Foreign refusal to accept China’s trade policies**
3. **The appointment of a deputy of the British Crown as superintendent of trade with China**

In response, Viceroy Lin Zexu confiscated 20,283 chests of opium. However, the British did not take to the situation lightly and promptly dispatched the Royal Navy to Canton, the move that announced the First Opium War. After capturing the eastern port city of Chusan, the British launched campaigns across Northern, Southern, and central China. Finally, after defeating the

Chinese at Zhenjiang, a strategic inland port city along the Yangtze, the British cut trade along the Grand Canal, rendering China quite literally immobile. Britain then forced China to sign the Treaty of Nanking, under which China would pay Britain 21 million dollars of war, opium, and trade reimbursements and would cede Hong Kong to royal control.

Fifteen years later during the peak of European imperialism, the Arrow Incident catapulted China and Britain into the Second Opium War. After Chinese marines captured a British cargo ship and refused to release three crew members, the British launched their navy once again at China. Later, France would join the fray on Britain's side because of the execution of a French missionary in the Guangxi province, which was sealed off to foreigners. The war would end in 1860 with the Convention of Beijing, which ratified the Treaty of Tianjin (originally proposed in 1858), ensured freedom of religion, the legalization of opium, and that Britain, France, and Russia would have a permanent diplomatic presence in Beijing. During the next thirty-five years from around 1860 to 1895, China would experience a Self-Strengthening Movement, where the Qing government finally adopted Western military technology and encouraged diplomats to learn European languages.

Current Situation:

The year is 1890. It is currently the thirtieth year of the Self-Strengthening Movement and the Tongzhi Restoration. Generals Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang have served me and the empire well in their suppression of the Taiping Rebellion and Nian Rebellions and their execution of military reforms. However as you officials know, discontent within the empire is rising, stemming not just from disillusioned minority subjects but also my own officials. Here, I have identified some sources of discontent.

1. **Foreign Religion:** The clearest example of this was the disastrous Taiping Rebellion. From 1850 to 1864, a peasant farmer, Hong Xiuquan, declared himself as the brother of the foreign man known as Jesus Christ. After quickly gaining followers among the poor in the rural parts of our empire, he established a self-made country for his followers called the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, clearly disrespecting the Mandate of Heaven that has bestowed my ancestors and the dynasties before me with the power of government. Hong then named Nanjing his capital. Within Nanjing, he introduced ridiculous reforms such as communal land use, giving women the same social status as men, and Christian ordinances. Fortunately Hong died, and imperial troops led by generals Zeng and Li laid siege to Nanjing and destroyed the Heavenly Kingdom. It would take our armies some time to completely eliminate the remaining Taiping rebels in the southern provinces, but now all last traces of the rebels are wiped out. How do we quell the spread of foreign religion, especially Christianity? In addition, the Muslim minority in our western and southern provinces are revolting. Given the centuries of peace in those regions and among those populations, what can we do to mitigate minority discontent?

2. **Relations with France and Russia:** Tensions with France, which now rules our Southern neighbor Vietnam, have finally de-escalated. However we must still be wary and ready in case they lay their eyes north on us. In addition, Russia has tried to intrude on Ili in the northwest while we were focusing on the Taiping Rebellion and Durgan Revolts of the time. With our newly trained and modernized military, we've now retaken our far western provinces with the Treaty of St. Petersburg. However, with Russia's presence on our border and its discontent that we have taken back a huge

swathe of land, we must now be prepared for confrontation at any time. How do we distribute our military to those regions and also Korea? Should we change our approach with Vietnam?

3. Militarization and Modernization: We have constructed small segments of railroads, arsenals by ports, and also ironworks in certain parts of the empire. However, productivity is still very low. We have also established connections with Western powers so that our new soldiers will be trained in Western ways of war. Military modernization will be how the Qing can assert their dominance in global affairs in this new era. How do we increase productivity in our industrial gains? How do we balance Confucianism and new forms of Western governance? How do we fund our modernization efforts?

Positions and Portfolio Powers:

General Li Hongzhang: Li will coordinate all internal and external affairs, including war. He is in charge of informing the emperor on all domestic and foreign disputes. As such, Li and the representatives of the cabinets of War, Foreign Affairs, and Internal Affairs will work together on such topics. Li and the Ministers of War and Foreign Affairs are in charge of writing treaties.

Statesman Zhang Zhidong: Zhang oversees most of the modernization efforts in China during this time. Having witnessed the Taiping Rebellion and the Russian occupation of Ili, Zhang is a skilled negotiator and statesman who has considerable influence on the emperor. Zhang will work closely with the cabinets and also foreign ambassadors to assert Chinese interests.

Zongli Yamen: In charge of overseeing all foreign affairs, the Zongli Yamen will handle all requests from foreign ambassadors and report those requests to either the emperor or the appropriate official within the Qing bureaucracy.

Minister of Foreign Affairs (Europe): The minister of foreign affairs with Europe will be in charge of directing all relations with relevant European powers. They may work with ministers of other cabinets to coordinate on domestic/international joint projects between China and European powers.

Minister of War (Europe): The minister of war (Europe) is in charge of evaluating all possible militaristic threats from European powers. The minister will work with the Zongli Yamen and the minister of foreign affairs (Europe). In addition the minister may interact with European ambassadors to plan joint military operations or to send Chinese soldiers to train in Europe.

Minister of Internal Affairs: The minister of internal affairs oversees domestic economic, political, and military issues within the empire. The minister will work with the advisor of internal affairs to report to the emperor on civil unrest and the state of each province.

Advisor of Internal Affairs: The advisor of internal affairs will work closely with the minister of internal affairs to analyze domestic issues. The minister and the advisor can split the tasks however they wish, but the minister will ultimately present the final reports to the emperor.

Ambassador from Britain: The Chinese ambassador from Britain will work closely with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and any other Chinese cabinet position working in international relations or war.

Due to Chinese restrictions, interactions between ambassadors from different countries will be heavily scrutinized and will only be allowed upon request from the emperor. The ambassador will represent Britain's interests in China and aim to establish favorable treaties and/or contracts between the two.

Ambassador of Russia: The ambassador of Russia will represent Russian interests in 1880-1890 China. Topics of focus include Xinjiang and Outer Manchuria. Relations with Japan in this era should also be taken into account.

Ambassador of France: The ambassador of France will represent French interests in the 1880-1890 Asian sphere. The ambassador should take into account the aftermath of the Sino-French War from 1884-1885 in the former Chinese tributary state of Vietnam and other Asian relations during the era. The ambassador may request to work with domestic cabinet ministers that work in international relations.

Minister of Revenue: The minister of revenue is in charge of handling the finances of the empire, including, but not limited to: funding public works, the modernization of the military, campaigns, trade, etc. The minister of revenue will work closely with their advisor and other cabinet positions to advise the emperor on an effective budget.

Advisor of Revenue: The advisor of revenue will oversee tax collection and the state of the empire's monopoly on salt, tea, and other luxury goods. The advisor will work closely with the minister of revenue and with foreign diplomats only on matters of international trade.

Minister of Rites: The minister of rites is in charge of organizing the civil examination service (including possible updates to the exam to reflect the modernization of China) and managing relations with tributary nations e.g. Korea. As such, the minister of rites can confer with the ambassadors of Korea and Japan.

Minister of Justice: The minister of justice will work to levy punishments on unfair traders (foreign and domestic), citizens accused of treason, and deserters of the military. The minister may work with the minister and advisor of internal affairs, advisor of revenue, minister of war, and ministers of foreign relations to advise them on imposing restrictions on foreign merchants and/or powers.

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Topic 2: Decline of the Qing and Reform Following the First Sino-Japanese War

Introduction:

During the late 19th century, imperialistic China was facing increased threat from abroad and the decline of the Qing Dynasty. While spheres of influence were being carved out in China by European nations, Japan was modernizing its technology and military from the Meiji Restoration of 1868.

Korea served as China's most important tributary state and was one of the few areas in Asia not colonized by Western powers. However, during the Joseon Dynasty, Korea faced political instability from new leadership. Taking advantage of this weakness and attracted by Korea's strategic location, coal, and iron, Japan sent the gunboat, the Unyo, to Korean ports and successfully carried out an attack with its modernized firepower. In 1876, the Treaty of Gangwha established Korea's independence, opening its borders to both Japan and the West and ending China's exclusive hold over Korea. Specifically, Busan, Incheon, and Wonson were to be independent of China, although they continued to pay tribute. This treaty also set up an unequal trade agreement between Japan and Korea, which favored Japan and granted Japan special trading privileges.

Pro-Japanese radicalization in Korea was reflected through the Gapsin Coup (1884), during which radicals with Japanese support attempted to seize control of the Korean government. Under General Yuan Shikai, a Chinese garrison subdued the coup and retained Chinese influence in Korea. This resulted in the signing of the Li-Itō Convention (1885), also known as the Tientsin Convention or Tianjin Convention, in which both China and Japan agreed to remove their current troops from Korea and to notify each other before sending future troops into Korea.

Sino-Japanese tensions increased in 1893, when agents of Yuan Shikai supposedly assassinated Kim Ok-Kyun, a pro-Japanese Korean revolutionary. Ok-Kyun's severed body was then sent around on Chinese ships as a warning to suppress further radicalization.

In 1894, Korean peasants staged the Tonghak rebellion in support of the social reform religion, Tonghak. With this pressure, the Korean government called upon China for military aid. Because China sent troops into Korea without Japanese permission, the Japanese marked this as a violation of the Li-Itō Convention and retaliated by sending 8,000 of their own troops. Japanese troops invade and conquer Seoul, as well as develop the Japanese Joint Fleet in preparation for war. They risk war with Great Britain during the sinking of the Kow-Shing, a British merchant vessel

intending to send China supply and troop reinforcements. When Japan demanded land from China, China's refusal led to war.

August 1, 1894 marked the start of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). The Japanese first successfully gained control of Korea, defeating the Chinese in the Battle of Seonghwan and the Battle of Pyongyang. The Japanese Army and Imperial Japanese Navy continue the offensive into China, winning the Battle of the Yalu River and taking over Manchuria, wounding and killing thousands of Chinese civilians during the Port Arthur Massacre. In 1895, Japanese forces also occupied Taiwan and the Pescadores Islands, China's other tributary states. The Treaty of Shimonoseki ended the war, establishing Korea as independent and a sphere of Japan and forcing China to cede the Liaodong Peninsula in Manchuria, Taiwan, and the Pescadores Islands to Japan. China paid Japan in war reparations, as well as granted Japan access to commercial ports on the Yangtze River.

After the war, China was forced to acknowledge the need to advance and modernize its military and technology. The war exposed China's vulnerability and loss of sovereignty, making it a target of invasion for outside powers. Leaders such as the Guangxu Emperor were stimulated to reform China, leading to the 100 Days' Reform (1898). The 100 Days' Reform in total consisted of over 180 edicts initiating broad political and societal changes, including removal of the old civil service exam, creation of systematic national schools and colleges, adoption of Western industry, science, and technology, and legal and military reform. However, resistance from conservatives within China led to turmoil, such as the Boxer Rebellion (1900), during which the nationalistic and conservative ideology clashed with modern ideology.

Current Situation:

It is 1898 and the Qing Dynasty is in its downfall, no longer an unconquerable empire. Following its loss from the First Sino-Japanese War, China is weakened and desperate to recover from its war losses. Emperor Guangxu has just proposed the 100 Days' Reform. Emperor Guangxu has just proposed the 100 Days' Reform, but still develops policy with the influence of his aunt, Empress Cixi. The following are issues the Qing Imperial Court is to address:

1. Post-War Maintenance of the Empire: The Treaty of Shimonoseki establishes harsh and unequal terms for China because of its loss in the Sino-Japanese War. Should China accept the terms of this treaty or attempt to recover some of its lost territory and tributary states? Is further diplomatic negotiation or military pressure with Japan warranted to offset the unfavorable treaty terms? It's possible that China would like to interact with Korea separately, or with joint consideration from Japan. Another avenue for re-asserting the empire's status would be expansion in Asia, including established Asian nations and western colonies in Asia. Meanwhile, the Imperial Court must also maintain internal stability and ensure that both external and internal threats are properly suppressed.

2. Modernization and Westernization: As other nations, such as Japan embrace Western practices and technology, China remains traditionally Confucian. However, after the Sino-Japanese War and the failure of the Self-Strengthening Movement, there is motivation to modernize the government, military, and society. Conservatives and nationalists largely resist such modernization and

westernization attempts. They hold strict anti-foreign views and disprove of the 100 Days' Reform. Specifically, scholars, bureaucrats, military officers, and conservative ministers resist change, seeing westernization as a threat to Chinese culture and lobbying Dowager Empress Cixi for action.

Positions and Portfolio Powers:

Ambassador of Japan (2): The Ambassador of Japan negotiates treaties, commercial agreements, and foreign policy, and maintain Sino-Japanese relations.

Ambassador of Korea (2): The Ambassador of Korea negotiates treaties, commercial agreements, and foreign policy, and maintain Sino-Korean relations.

Minister of War (Asia): The Minister of War oversees the development of the military, war resources, and Asian war policy. The minister has primary authority in declaring war within Asia and deciding when to deploy troops within or outside of China, corresponding with the Minister of Security, General Yuan Shikai, and Emperor when doing so.

Minister of Public Relations: The Minister of Public Relations acts on behalf of the public interest in China and represents the majority. The Emperor consults the Minister of Public Relations for policy development.

Minister of Security: The Minister of Security is primarily concerned with protecting China and maintaining internal stability. The minister must consider how to balance the extent of foreign influence.

General Yuan Shikai: General Yuan Shikai establishes the first modern Chinese army and plays a major role in leading troops during the years around the First Sino-Japanese War. The General is pro-modernization and seeks to advance the state of technology.

Minister of Foreign Asian Affairs: The Minister of Foreign Asian Affairs manages China's international relations in Asia and specifically interacts with the Ambassador of Japan and Ambassador of Korea. The minister also supervises China's tributary states and overseas territories.

Empress Dowager Cixi: Aunt to Emperor Guangxu, Empress Dowager Cixi has strong authority within the Chinese government and advises the Emperor. Although accepting of some reform, the empress opposes any radical reform that would threaten her position and China.

Advisor to Empress Dowager Cixi: The advisor aids the empress in developing policy and guides her executive decisions. The advisor is conservative and closely consults the empress.

Emperor Guangxu: Emperor Guangxu is the current leader of the Qing Dynasty, but rules under some influence from Empress Dowager Cixi. He initiates the 100 Days' Reform and intends to modernize China through political, legal, and social reforms.

Advisor to Emperor Guangxu: The advisor aids the emperor in developing policy and guides his executive decisions. The advisor is pro-modernization and closely consults the emperor.

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